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Premier's Office,

Hobart.

20th December, 1932.

GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCES IN TASMANIA.Extract from records of Chief Secretary's Department.

At Hobart, first built for Lt. Governor David Collins, a two roomed building, constructed of "spars" with a thatched roof. Its locality is not stated, but was probably near that of the later structure.

The second residence was at the south eastern side of Macquarie Street, near Elizabeth Street (this latter St. terminated then, and until 1858, at the Franklin Square corner). The building was of very inferior workmanship, and was reported to be in a dilapidated condition in 1813. On the arrival of Lt. Governor Sorell early in 1817, its condition was still worse. It has been stated that Col. Sorell ordered its demolition, but in his despatch to Governor Macquarie (Sydney) of May 3rd, 1817, he stated, "I have undertaken additions and alterations to the building, and am staying at Mr. Birch's until the house can be occupied." (Birch's house is now known as the "Metropolitan College", but was then "Macquarie House"). In 1820 servants' offices had been added, a verandah built, and the outside stuccoed. In Governor Arthur's early despatches he reported the need of enlargements and repairs (1825). Fourteen rooms were added in 1827, one of which, 36 ft. x 23 ft. was set aside for the use of the Legislative Council. This house, under frequent repair, was in use until 1858, when it was pulled down, and the continuation of Elizabeth Street was carried out.

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As early as in 1811 Governor Macquarie advised the Domain as the most suitable site for the Lt. Governor's residence; he favoured Macquarie Point, and authorised its purchase from Leonard Fosbrooks, to whom it had been granted by Col. Collins. The matter was left in abeyance, probably because of the expense entailed by buying back these lands from the original holders, one of whom mulcted the Government in many thousands of pounds over a period of 30 years.

Col. Arthur advocated a new house on the Domain before repairs were effected to the Macquarie Street residence, but the British Government, beginning to recover from the heavy expenditure on the Napoleonic wars, had been spending rather recklessly, and was anxious to curtail expenditure in its "foreign" dominions, so the scheme was held over. In August 1835, the proposal was again mooted, and Col. Arthur visited the Domain with the purpose of choosing an alternative site to Macquarie Point. He favoured Hangan's Point, near the present building, but it was not until 1840 that Lt. Governor Sir John Franklin began the construction. The plans for the building were executed by an English architect, James Blackburn, whose name is remembered as the designer of many of the early churches in the island, and it has lately been recalled in Melbourne as the father of the Yan Yean Water Supply. His design for Government House is included in this Department's records; its total cost was estimated at £12,000. The foundation stone was laid by the Governor on Nov. 11, 1840, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon in the presence "a brilliant assemblage" including Sir James Ross, the officers of H.M.S. "Erebus" and "Terror," the Colonel and officers of 51st Regiment and the leading colonists; salutes were fired from the warships and from Mulgrave Battery. The work went ahead under the daily superintendence of the architect, only lately released.

released from "Government" service, but a period of depression had set in all over the world. The United Kingdom was badly hit, and the British Government again set about a curtailment of colonial expenditure. In 1843, an order arrived from the Colonial Office, suspending the continuation of all new public works, amongst which was included Government House. The order was a heavy blow to James Blackburn, the architect, the Government having also accepted his contract for a bridge across the Derwent at Risdon, shortly before. It was not until 1853 that the work was continued. A vote of £5,000 was included in the estimates in January towards the building. The architect this time was William Posdorn Kay, a nephew of Sir John Franklin's first wife - the Director of Public Works. His design was a less elaborate one. He chose a site close to the unfinished structure, the walls of which he pulled down using the materials already on the ground in his work. His building, the present structure, stands a little to the back of the 1840 site. A large amount of timber was shipped from Southport in 1842, but not sufficient, the remainder being obtained from Port Arthur. Cedar to the amount of 22,750 ft. was brought from N.S. Wales in 1842; this, with other materials, had been stored in the basement of the earlier structure, and was utilised for the new building. The stone was obtained from two quarries nearby, the one being now the site of Beaumaris Zoo, the other being the basis of the small lake near the Botanical Gardens. A short railway was laid down to convey the stone to the site, and the bricks used were burnt at the river's bank from clay found on the spot. A supply of 220 gallons of water was delivered per diem at a cost of 2/6d. It will be seen that a good deal of material was

ready

ready when the present building was begun. During the session of the Legislative Council of 1852, £5,000 was added to the estimates towards the completion of the Domain structure, but on the understanding that no "Government" labour was to be employed on the work. Sir William Denison, then Governor, was a transportationist, while the majority of the Council were strong opponents of the system, hence the proviso, which added very considerably to the expense of the building. The gold rush of 1851 to Victoria had largely depleted this Colony's supply of free and conditionally free labour, and wages had risen to what in those days was considered a very high rate; naturally the estimated costs for every class of the work had to be revised. The total expenditure was met by Government votes. Posdern Kay estimated the cost, including the laying on of water and gas and furnishings at £46,249.14. 6. but when the final accounts were settled, it was found to have reached nearly £67,000. It was not until January 2, 1858, that Sir Hy. Fox Young removed from the Macquarie St. House. The iron gates and stone piers were not put in until 1859, and the old residence was demolished in the same year. The sale of portion of the land fronting Franklin Wharf netted £20,222.17.11, and it was expected the entire property would give a total of £47,000. It is interesting to note that the clock in the tower is the first public clock imported into the Colony. It was requisitioned for by Lt. Governor Davey in 1816, for St. David's Church, the foundation stone of which he laid in 19.2.1817. It arrived in the Colony in 1824, and was placed in the tower on Dec. 30, 1825. It had one dial only, and was constructed by Thwaites and Reed of Clerkenwell Road, London, for the British Government

House
74 years old

Government in 1821. In about 1843, it was removed and sold for £50. When a clock was required for the building in progress of erection on the Domain it was bought back for £150.

The Botanical Gardens on the Domain were in existence in the twenties. A green house was ordered in 1829, further improvements being made in 1831. Sir Eardley Wilmot in 1844 built the wall around the area allotted to Government House. The Gardens were opened to the public in the following year.

In about 1904, in London, J. Gunn, a book agent, got into touch with the Agent General for Tasmania (late Hon. Alfred Dobson) and offered for sale the documents and coins which had been placed on the foundation stone of the 1840 house or proposed building. It was said that workmen filched them when demolishing the walls in 1853, but it is not known through whose hands they passed to J. Gunn. The document bears the signature of Sir John Franklin, Sir James Ross, and those of the leading officers of the Government. The relics were purchased for £10 and returned to the Colony.

The house at Risdon, built for Capt. John Bowen in 1803-4 is not included in this paper. He was never given the position or title of Governor.

(Sgd.) E. PARKES.

UNDER SECRETARY.